

LOOKING TOWARD A BETTER TOMORROW IN FORESTRY ^{1/}

by

Dr. Joseph S. Illick
Dean Emeritus,
College of Forestry, State University of New York
Syracuse, New York

- - - -

I come to you today not to bring a profound message about forestry in general or any aspect thereof, but to talk to you in a simple, heartfelt, and I hope helpful way, about "Looking Toward a Better Tomorrow in Forestry". I am truly grateful for the privilege of participating in this fiftieth anniversary celebration of forest research at the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station here at Wooster.

Among the reasons that caused me to accept Chairman Diller's invitation to address this meeting was the forward-looking subject he suggested for our consideration, namely, "The Next Fifty Years in Forestry". I had not proceeded far, however, with the assembling and organizing of material for this talk, when I became alarmingly aware of the difficulties and uncertainties involved in attempting to forecast possible developments in forestry for so long a period as the next fifty years. The more I thought of this task the greater became my feeling of indisputable inadequacy. Fortunately adequate courage then came to me to suggest that the title be changed to a less encompassing and more attainable one, such as "Looking Ahead in Forestry", or "Looking Toward a Better Tomorrow in Forestry".

Ohio Provided a Favorable Environment for Forestry

There is a second reason why I accepted Dr. Diller's invitation. My studies of the development of American forestry, especially as they relate to the forty-three states that now have administrative units for forestry in their governmental organization, convinced me that Ohio deserves inclusion among the states that provide a favorable environment for the consideration of progressive forestry idea, and welcome forward-looking suggestions for improved forest practices. There is plenty of proof that these favorable attitudes toward progressive forestry ideas and practices began to manifest themselves in the early days of forestry in Ohio. Recent developments and trends also give ample assurance that this pioneering spirit is still active in the forestry programs of the Buckeye State.

Looking Ahead in Forestry

This theme of "Looking Toward a Better Tomorrow in Forestry" is not a new one to me. As far back as I can recall in my teaching of forestry - and this now covers a period of forty-eight years - I have been stressing the importance of looking ahead. And now that I am so obviously and undeniably functioning in the fading twilight period of life, I find myself still possessed with a strong feeling of preference for discussion topics that have their main settings and objectives in the future.

It may be of interest to you to know why and how this forward-looking attitude began to develop so early in my teaching career. It came to me in a substantial

^{1/} Presented October 7, 1954 at the Fiftieth Anniversary of Forestry Research at the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station at Wooster.

measure from the talks and teachings of a great American scholar and statesman, who served as Secretary of War in the cabinet of President William McKinley, Secretary of State in the cabinet of President Theodore Roosevelt and in 1912 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. His name was Elihu Root. In the last public address of his lifetime, the occasion being the 25th anniversary of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace he said:

"Keep looking out in front. We are making lots of mistakes. Your job is to correct the mistakes. You don't do it by sitting down and finding fault. You must work out a sound plan and carry it through."

Now having explained to you how I became inspired by this great American statesman and scholar, I will try to look forward with you toward a better tomorrow in American forestry, with an occasional reference to forestry conditions, activities and possibilities in Ohio. However, before adventuring into the realm of the future of forestry, it seems appropriate that we consider briefly a few additional background developments of forestry in Ohio.

Some Significant Background Developments

In 1873, that is eighty-one years ago, Dr. John A. Warder, then a physician and active horticulturist of Cincinnati and North Bend, Ohio, served as U. S. Commissioner to the World's Fair in Vienna. Upon his return to the United States he submitted a report on "Forests and Forestry in Germany". This report is now generally classified among the important early forestry literature of America.

On September 10, 1875 Dr. Warder called together a small group of forestry-minded men and women in the Grand Pacific Hotel in Chicago to consider the forest and forestry situation of the United States. An outgrowth of this meeting was the formation of the American Forestry Association, now the oldest continuously functioning forest conservation association in America, with a present membership of about 25,000 and an annual operating budget of \$300,000. Dr. Warder served as its first president from 1875 to 1882.

In 1882 the American Forest Congress was founded at Cincinnati, Ohio. Shortly thereafter it was merged with the American Forestry Association. In these, and later forestry efforts, Dr. Warder was joined by Judge Warren Higley, also of Cincinnati. Judge Higley served as president of the American Forestry Association from 1885 to 1886. He was also active in the establishment of the original Ohio Forestry Association founded in 1883, and later upon returning to his native state, helped to organize the New York State Forestry Association. It is noteworthy that a single trained forester was then functioning in Ohio, and only one in all of America.

State Forestry Bureau in Ohio

Ohio is also properly credited with being among the first states to recognize forestry as a state responsibility and service. On April 16, 1885 there was established by law a "State Forestry Bureau" at Ohio State University. Prior thereto only two other states - California and Colorado - had established forestry units in their governmental structure. It is noteworthy that these two states antedated Ohio by only forty-four and twelve days respectively, in the setting up of forestry units in their state governments.

An appropriation of \$1,000 was made available for the first year of operation of this original forestry bureau in Ohio. Unfortunately this bureau was discontinued in 1890. Perhaps this first forestry bureau was established too soon, that is, before adequate and enduring public sentiment favorable to forestry had been developed. In fact, this may have been generally true throughout the nation; for the original state forestry units set up, both in California and Colorado, were also discontinued temporarily soon after their establishment, only to be reestablished later on when a more sustained sentiment favorable to forestry achieved.

In the first annual report of the Ohio State Forestry Bureau, covering the activities of the year 1885, Adolphe Leue, Secretary of the Bureau writes:

"It certainly is very gratifying to contemplate that nearly all the more important events in the history of the development of the forestry movement in this country either originated in the State of Ohio, or were fostered by its citizens."

While we of today may feel that Secretary Leue was perhaps extremely generous to the citizens of Ohio in crediting them so fully and exclusively with the originating and fostering of the forestry movement in the United States, there remains the significant fact that there was then present here in Ohio a strong sentiment, a compelling enthusiasm and a dedicated devotion to forestry.

This sketchy presentation of some of the early forestry developments in Ohio, and especially the inclusion of the names of the pioneering personalities that fashioned the early forestry programs of Ohio and our nation, is intentional and deliberate. Being fully aware that I cannot and should not attempt in this brief talk to cover the whole field of forestry, I have, therefore, elected to consider with you this afternoon some of the important human aspects thereof.

Human Resources in Forestry

Each succeeding year we are becoming more fully aware of the importance of human resources in forestry. In my world-wide studies of forestry, I have yet to find a single example of forestry that was not conceived, directed and developed by people. In fact, the world over one finds that people are the most essential and vital element in forestry. In making this statement I do not wish in any sense to minimize the importance of means, methods, techniques or practices in forestry, for any or all of them can be highly important. But as I have observed forestry in the past, see it today, and visualize it for the future, the people who have given, are now giving, or in the future will give direction to, or otherwise participate in it, are deserving of the highest rating and foremost consideration. Their aims, attitudes and actions will continue to determine its policies and patterns, and formulate and develop its plans, programs, and practices.

People Determine the Directions of Forestry

I also venture the prediction that in the development of forestry during the next ten, twenty, or fifty years, the most basic and powerful determining factors will be the understandings, attitudes and actions of the people whose responsibility and privilege it will be to determine its directions, participate in its actions, and provide its supports.

In taking this look into the future of forestry, I could have very properly elected to consider with you such subjects as the extension and improvement of forest fire and forest pest control, the betterment of forest practices, the extension of recreational opportunities, the development of better habitats for wildlife, the increase of water yields from forested areas, the development of new forest products and processes, the advantages of multiple-use management and the benefits to be derived from extending and improving forest survey. Likewise, I could have claimed that research and education are essential components of any forward-looking program in forestry, and that to insure the practice of forestry on the numerous small forest holdings throughout our country, a substantial increase in public assistance is needed. That all of these items are important is certainly true. There are, however, two good reasons why I am not following this plan of presentation. My principal reason is that all of these topics and many more have been considered rather fully and with superior competence at several recent nation-wide conferences and congresses.

Recent Forestry Conferences and Congresses

Available for your consideration are the printed proceedings (372 pages) of the Fourth American Forest Congress held in Washington, D.C., October 29-31, 1953. Included in these proceedings is "A Proposed Program for American Forestry", first recommended by a committee of thirty-three specialists covering all fields of forestry and representing all parts of the United States. Recently this proposed program was approved by the officers and members of the American Forestry Association.

Several months later (December 2-4, 1953) the Mid-Century Conference on Resources for the Future was also held in Washington, D.C. The printed proceedings covering this conference should be available soon.

There is also the 1944 printed report (109 pages) on "Ohio's Forest Resources", for which Dr. Diller served as Editor-in-Chief. It includes "A Recommended Long-Range Forestry Program for Ohio".

With the existence of these recent comprehensive and authoritative reports there seems to exist no real need for a further consideration of these topics at this time. Far greater, it seems to me, is the need for consideration of the human resources in forestry, the treatment of which to date has been grossly inadequate in relation to its importance.

In my study of the printed report on Ohio's Forest Resources there developed a feeling of disappointment, for I had reached page 109, it being the last one, without finding any specific chapter or other heading relating to the human aspects of our forest resources. And then, as I was in the process of closing this otherwise informative report I noted in the following statement on the inside back cover:

"We must so conduct ourselves that future generations will speak of the men and women of 1943 as we speak of the men and women of 1776."

James F. Byrnes

Then I turned to the outside back cover and there to my great amazement and deep satisfaction I found a large message on "Conservation and Human Welfare", by Louis Bromfield, a message that every American should read and take to heart.

I wish our time schedule would permit me to share all of this message with you. Perhaps I can make you hungry by quoting just a part of it.

"Unquestionably the most important event in American history since the founding of the Republic and the preservation of the Union is the great conservation program now in steady progress. ****

"A few farseeing individuals who will go down in history as great men, saw danger signals ahead, and began working to conserve instead of wasting the inconceivable wealth bestowed by God and nature upon the citizens of our rich and wasteful Democracy.

"****Behind the wisdom and farsightedness of that handful of men has come a small army of God-given devoted citizens with other motives than those of ruthlessness and greed - citizens who in their way are heroes, operating in an unspectacular way not to pollute streams and plunder forests and create waste and ugliness but to guard and rebuild the beauties and riches of the country. These are the men working in the forestry and conservation plans. They are men who instead of destroying faith, breed new and stronger belief in Democracy, decency and neighborly cooperation. Behind them is still another army of good citizens who are cooperating under their guidance to create new forests and preserve the old ones. ****It is impossible to estimate adequately the value of the efforts of these good men."

And now may I again refer to Dr. John A. Warder of Cincinnati, and call to your attention the enduring esteem in which he is held some seventy years after his fruitful pioneering efforts in forestry. In the October, 1950 issue of American Forests, devoted almost entirely to the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the American Forestry Association appears the following:

"The vigor and zeal with which the American Forestry Association launched its forestry and timber culture crusade following its organizational meeting in Chicago in 1875, is traceable in large part to the capable leadership supplied by Dr. John A. Warder, newly elected president."

Helpful Lessons Can be Learned from Early Forestry Advocates

That much can be learned from the experiences and examples of these early forestry advocates is undeniably true. They achieve much with little. Their financial support was extremely meager. There were then no examples of forestry anywhere in the United States. There was then only one professionally trained forester in America, he having arrived from Germany in 1876 and become an American citizen in 1883. And yet this small band of advocates laid an enduring foundation for American forestry. To them forestry was an imperative necessity. They set themselves to their chosen task with enthusiasm and dedication. They held fast to their professions with an abiding faith. They were aware of their limited understanding of forest conditions and what constitutes good forestry practices.

They demonstrated how to cooperate effectively, and how to compromise in the best interests of forestry. They set their goals high and worked earnestly and strenuously to attain them. We of today and tomorrow can learn many valuable lessons in effective human relations from their earnest efforts and exemplary services.

An Encouraging Beginning in Study of Human Resources

There is a growing body of evidence that a substantial and encouraging beginning has been made already in the development of much needed information regarding the human resources in forestry. This information is finding its way into actual forest practices and into forestry literature. Tom Gill devotes a full chapter to "The People" in his recent book on "Land Hunger in Mexico". In it he says: "Consciously or uncounsciously, it is the people who decide the ultimate fate of their resources."

In 1950 there was published a book on "Forests and Men". Its author is William B. Greeley, who from 1920 to 1928 served as Chief of the U. S. Forest Service and since then has continued to make outstanding contributions in many fields of forestry. In this book I find that

"From first to last our forestry faith must be in the land and the people who make their living from the yield of the soil. ***For the future of forestry we must rely on the people of the woods. It is the people who are preventing forest fires. Today the woods are full of foresters. And their works are everywhere."

As of June 30, 1954, a total of 25,600 degrees in forestry had been granted by the forestry schools and colleges of the United States. In 1904, when forest research was initiated at the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, there were less than 50 professionally trained foresters in all America.

Also in 1950, the Oregon State College Cooperative Association published a 105-page booklet by Professor Walter F. McCulloch under the practical title of "The Forester on the Job". Among the timely topics included therein are "the importance of morale", "the pride of belonging", "the importance of experience", "the wise use of time", "the desire for recognition", "the rating of employees", "the selection of subordinates", "how to become an effective employee", and "the importance of getting along with people".

A Record of "My Boys"

Ever since I began my teaching career I have been assembling information regarding a wide range of forestry subjects. Much of this information relates to personnel problems and policies. Among this information is a series of folders entitled "My Boys". These folders are now among my most precious professional possessions. They contain the scholastic and career records of former students with whom I had the privilege of working rather closely. It is deeply gratifying and reassuring to tell you that most of these career records of my former students are commendable. There are, however, as you would expect, some records of failures, a number of them being quite depressing in nature. Happily, however, there are not too many of the latter.

I am sure you are interested in knowing about one of the astonishing facts that has developed out of these career records in that there have been practically no failures because of technical incompetence, that is, failures that could be attributed primarily to a lack of competence in the technical aspects of training. On the contrary most of the failures have been due to personality factors such as difficulty in getting along with people, lack of tact, uncontrolled temper, over-active ambition, impatience, insubordination, carelessness, selfishness, or dishonesty.

These findings of mine do not stand alone. They have been confirmed and re-confirmed by other studies. Recently, Professor Clifford Adams of Pennsylvania State University wrote: "At least two-thirds of all job releases are due to personality flaws, rather than to technical incompetence."

An Elective Course in Human Relations in Forestry

These, and other similar findings, were largely responsible for my offering for the first time in 1947 an elective course in Human Relations in Forestry at the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse, where I was then serving as Dean. From its beginning, this course was well-received. Thus far more than 200 students have elected it. Among the topics considered in this course are:

- Factors Affecting Successful Job Performance
- How to Get Along with People
- How to Size Up People
- How to Become a Good Employee
- How to Test Your Personality
- How Well - or How Mal-adjusted Are You
- How to Enjoy Forestry and be Useful in It
- What Makes a Forester Tick
- The Perils and Pitfalls of a Young Forester
- Our Most Difficult Task - Managing Ourselves
- A Philosophy for Our Times

The Resource of Cooperation

Dr. Stanley C. Allyn, President of the National Cash Register Company during a commencement address in 1952 at Miami University said:

"Today the most useful person in the world is the man or woman who knows how to get along with other people. Human relations is the most important science in the broad curriculum of living."

Whether we are functioning in forestry or otherwise it is well for us to realize that few things in life are done entirely alone, and that no self becomes its best self by itself.

A hundred years ago only one out of five Americans at work was employed, that is, worked for someone else. The other four were self-employed. Today only one out of five persons is self-employed. This means that more and more people are working as part of a team, and, therefore, need to understand the principles and practices in cooperative efforts.

The Resource of Enthusiasm

In December 1948 a cable was sent to Sir Edward Appleton in Edinburg, Scotland. You may recall that he had made possible around-the-world broadcasting. He also had won a Nobel Prize and had just been named Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh. In this cable he was asked, "What is the secret of your success?" Sir Edward answered: "It is enthusiasm". This great scientist went on to say, "I rate enthusiasm even above professional skill".

In considering this important human resource of enthusiasm, it seems appropriate to ask ourselves what we mean by it. Some people think it's yelling and screaming or pounding the table. That's not so. Enthusiasm is not lung power. On the contrary, it's spirit. It comes from the inside. The truly enthusiastic person is earnestly sincere. He is stimulating and inspiring. He gives off sparks, holds one's interest, and makes you want to do things and do them well. A fundamental principle of successful living is that you cannot enjoy life unless you are useful and feel that you are doing something tremendously worth while. This means having a sense of worth or having a proper esteem for yourself.

The Resource of Friendliness

It may also help us to think about the resource of friendliness, which is among the top objectives and superlative attainments of every happy and useful life. In thinking of this great human resource, it is important to realize that we are not born to friends. Friends are not provided to us as a part of life's environment and working equipment. It is our responsibility to find, to make, and to keep them. And this is not a temporary or part-time task. Instead, it is an ever-continuing responsibility. And, if properly done, can become one of the most powerful and most satisfying of human resources.

One may learn to do well the tasks that are his to do, both in quantity and quality. He may become an outstanding success as a technician or practitioner, but I venture the assertion that one's greatest success and deepest satisfactions will come from having learned to live and work happily with your associates, and this means the finding and holding of a proper place among friends.

The Resource of Good Habits

There is a group of important human resources that we have become accustomed to speak of collectively as habits. Too often when the word "habits" is mentioned we think of bad habits. In the development of forestry, and especially in the field of forestry education, irrespective of whether it be professional, semi-professional or public education, it is important to be continuously aware that there are good habits, and that there is no better way to achieve success or attain a full and happy life than through the formation, maintenance and extension of good habits. I will mention only a few of them.

1. The habit of working hard and liking it.
2. The habit of surmounting difficulties in small matters as well as in large responsibilities.

3. The habit of finishing whatever you undertake, irrespective of the level at which you are working. No task is too low or too menial to do it well.
4. The habit of being yourself at your best.
5. The habit of thinking positively, not negatively.
6. The habit of confident living.

The Resource of Broad Interests

Then there is also the resource of broad interests. We are becoming increasingly aware that no longer are the duties and responsibilities of the forester limited to a narrow specialty. On the contrary, he is called upon to participate rather regularly and understandingly in a wide range of matters relating to the social, economic and political affairs of the community in which he lives. More and more is the professionally trained man, irrespective of whether he be a doctor, an engineer, an architect, a hotel manager or a forester, expected to take an active and contributing part in community, state, national and international life.

The Resource of Looking Ahead

Among the distinguishing characteristics of great men and women is the impressive fact that their best thoughts and actions are directed into the future. Almost 100 years ago, to be exact on December 1, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln in a message to The Congress said:

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. As our case is new, so must we think anew and act anew".

Among the great truths of this twenty-five word message of President Lincoln is not that it was delivered almost a century ago, but that it is as truly and fully applicable today as it was then.

In Conclusion

Forestry in the United States started about seventy-five years ago. It began in a very small struggling and indefinite way. Its growth has been tremendous and gratifying. Its background is dotted densely with innumerable examples of commendable progress and superior achievements. Its foreground looks attractive and promising, with plenty of opportunities for a wide range of worthwhile actions and services.

In looking forward to a better tomorrow in forestry, I venture the prediction that the future of forestry will be determined largely by the attitudes, aims, and actions of the people who will determine its policies and programs, participate in its actions, and provide its supports. There appears to exist, almost everywhere in forestry an enlarging need for a fuller and more fruitful consideration of the human resources concerned therewith.